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ABSTRACT

In a discussion on amplified objectives in language evaluation, this paper delineates various strands of contextual input that constitute the design of a language program. Philosophical, sociocultural, and psychological aspects are included. Amplified objectives are discussed in the context of domain-referenced language testing and program evaluation that incorporates the objectives into each phase of program evaluation (context, input, process, product, and overall evaluation). It is noted that by incorporating the context and content of language along with the skills, test techniques, stimulus forms and response mode, amplified objectives provide strong guidelines for developing and evaluating a language program. An example of amplified objectives for an English course in Mathayomsuksa VI (Grade 12) in Thailand is included. Contains 11 references. (LB)

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# THE ROLE OF AMPLIFIED OBJECTIVES IN DOMAIN-REFERENCED LANGUAGE PROGRAM EVALUATION

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## ABSTRACT

Amplified objectives go several steps beyond the behavioral ones. By incorporating the context and content of communication through the medium of language along with the skills, micro-skills, test techniques, the stimulus forms and the mode of response, amplified objectives provide strenuous guidelines for the development of a language program and its evaluation.

The paper delineates the various strands of contextual input that goes into the design of a language program, e.g., philosophical, socio-cultural and psychological. The presentation encompasses discussions about amplified objectives in the context of domain-referenced language testing and program evaluation which incorporated amplified objectives into each phase of program evaluation from context to input, to process, to product, and finally to the interface in the overall evaluation.

An example of amplified objectives for an English course in Mathayomsuksa VI (Grade 12) is included.

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3. The Role of Amplified Objectives in Domain-Referenced Language Program Evaluation.

Paper presented at the Regional Seminar of the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre in Singapore on Trends in Language Testing and Program Evaluation, April 1990, and subsequently at the Post-RELC Regional Seminar organized by the Chulalongkorn University Language Institute in Bangkok.

The presentation is divided into four parts beginning with an introduction to amplified objectives and domain-referenced language testing and programs, followed by the developments of educational objectives, amplified objectives in the context of language program evaluation, and an example of amplified objectives of an English language program.

# INTRODUCTION

## Amplified Objectives

Amplified objectives are a significant attribute of the domain-referenced model of language program evaluation. These objectives are much finer and more specific than behavioral ones. Amplified objectives consist of four dimensions: specifications of skills or sub-skills, specifications of content, testing techniques--discrete-point, macro-skills, single-skill test or integrated-skill test, and specifications of modes of response - supply types, e.g., short answers, fill - in, or selection types, e.g., multiple choice, matching, etc.

Similar to a criterion-referenced test, a test developed from amplified objectives will contain items measuring student performance on an objective or a set of related objectives with the property of homogeneity.

## Domain-referenced Language Testing and Programs

Domain-referenced testing is a system developed to measure learning mastery which goes beyond criterion-referenced testing by not focussing only on the criteria of achievement according to behavioral objectives, but also on the content/skill and the context of evaluation and the environment of learning and acquisition. A domain incorporates areas covered by the objectives, the content of learning, the skills or sub-skill levels (e.g., speaking skill at the criticism level, reading skill at the comprehension level or the interpretative level), student behavior and learning activities (e.g., taking notes, listening to lectures) and the media for learning (e.g., textbook, audio-tape, video-

tape, blackboard, etc.). The domain must have a definite area with clear borderlines separating it from other domains. In language testing and program evaluation, the domain is developed from the language syllabus by systematic sampling. In specifying a domain, it is necessary to include the following steps:

(1) setting the limits of a domain

(2) setting test types and test techniques as stimuli for student response

(3) setting the modes and methods of response

(4) setting the quantities of content/skills/sub-skills sampled from the domain of teaching and learning

(5) setting the cut-off score of language competence

A specified domain will set a clear limit to the field and range of objectives and skills/content of test items according to the steps spelled out above. The skills/contents of a domain-referenced test of listening skills may look like this:

(a) listening to a conversation in a play

(b) listening through the media of television

(c) listening for pleasure/entertainment

(d) listening connected with family affairs

In developing a domain-referenced test the following parameters should be considered:

(1) Context: time and location of language interaction, e.g., in the classroom, at the train-station, in the restaurant etc.

(2) Content Key: main idea or topic of language interaction, e.g., language in bargaining, in business transactions, in signing a treaty, in lecturing about biology, in advertising, etc.

(3) Function and Discourse: language for work or personal purposes, elaborated/restricted code, referential/directive/poetic/phatic function or metalanguage, descriptive/persuasive/explanatory discourse.

(4) Modality: language interactions via the oral mode (listening/speaking) or the visual mode (reading/writing/translation).

(5) Genre: methods of employing language skills, e.g., writing a personal letter, writing an essay, taking notes, writing a telegram, talking on the telephone, reading a newspaper, etc.

(6) Role: interactions between language transmitters and receivers, e.g., teacher-student, father-son, friend-friend, brother-older brother, etc.

(7) Status: socio-economic statuses or professional areas governing the style and register of langauge use, e.g. ecclesiastical language, court language, vulgar language, language for specific purposes--English for air-line hostesses, etc.

(8) Pre-supposition: anticipation of language transmissions, e.g., expectancy of the incoming message through some media or a face-to-face interaction; familiarity with the language user or transmitter will facilitate communication, for example reading a friend's smeared letter with some words or phrases missing, or listening to one's mother in a noisy market place. Here communication is not hampered on account of the receiver's correct anticipation of the incoming message.

(9) Mood and Attitude: the mood and attitudes of language users can determine the content and style of language used, e.g., humorous, rude, sincere, sarcastic, negative, positive, etc.

(10) Formality: the level of language used, e.g., formal, colloquial, slang, academic, standard, sub-standard, etc.

The above parameters are embodied in the unit of meaning used to develop language test items to their full authenticity. The unit of meaning (B.J. Carroll, 1980) is composed of:

(1) Situation: e.g., students attending a lecture on biology

(2) Language Function: e.g., inquiry

(3) Language Interaction: e.g., a student asking the teacher a question

(4) Style: e.g., formal, polite

The unit of meaning: Inquiry (+ polite), (+ formal)

Language Manifestation: Excuse me, I wonder if you could explain about the nucleus of bacteria again.

To conclude, we can say that the development of a domain-referenced language program as well as of a domain-referenced testing scheme for evaluating the psychological and sociological aspects of language interactions, provides the underpinnings for a language program aimed at communicative competence, by which student language performance is maximized through practice and use of language specified by the domain. (See examples in Appendices I and II developed from a set of learning objectives listed in Appendix III).

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

This part will trace the development of educational objectives from the traditional model to the behavioral/performance model and the amplified model.

Before 1920 the goals and objectives of education were abstract and elevated. There were no clear-cut terms to describe objectives. Imitation of the classical styles, appreciation of poetry and the upholding of cultural heritage were the goals from which broad and hazy objectives were developed.

With the advent of behaviorist psychology, in the 1950's language educators used the audio-lingual approach emphasizing the acquisition of new habits through practice. Precision of sound production and new vocabulary through mim-mem (mimicry-memorization) and gradual acquisition of reading and writing skills were at the center of the stage. Programmed instruction developed from the rationale of Skinnerian psychology which flourished in this era.

Hazy and elevated objectives were denounced and replaced by the clear, measurable, precise and concrete behavioral objectives. They have proved to be very valuable for program development and evaluation. However, for a domain-referenced language program in which social

interactions, attitudes, awareness of others' points of view, anticipation of incoming message and the context of situations are necessary parameters, behavioral objectives may not be very appropriate in the same way as Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, dividing them into three areas; cognitive, affective and psychomotor, will not be suitable for the evaluation of a language program which is cognitive skill-oriented. Kibler, Barker and Miles (1970, p.75) stated that they believe that "taxonomies can be valuable educational tools but that they are not appropriate to all objectives, especially those involving complex behaviors." Baker (1974, p.18) pointed out the drawbacks of behavioral objectives as incapable of being the bases for developing a syllabus, a good test and remedial teaching. This is because behavioral objectives lack the specification of representative content for syllabus/test development. A test will measure only whether the student has achieved the objective or not, while the test content may not at all be relevant to the syllabus or the goal of testing. Therefore, remedial instruction cannot stem from the results of a test measuring specific objectives, yet not having a well-defined domain of content/skill. To solve this problem, Baker recommended the use of amplified objectives used for domain-referenced testing.

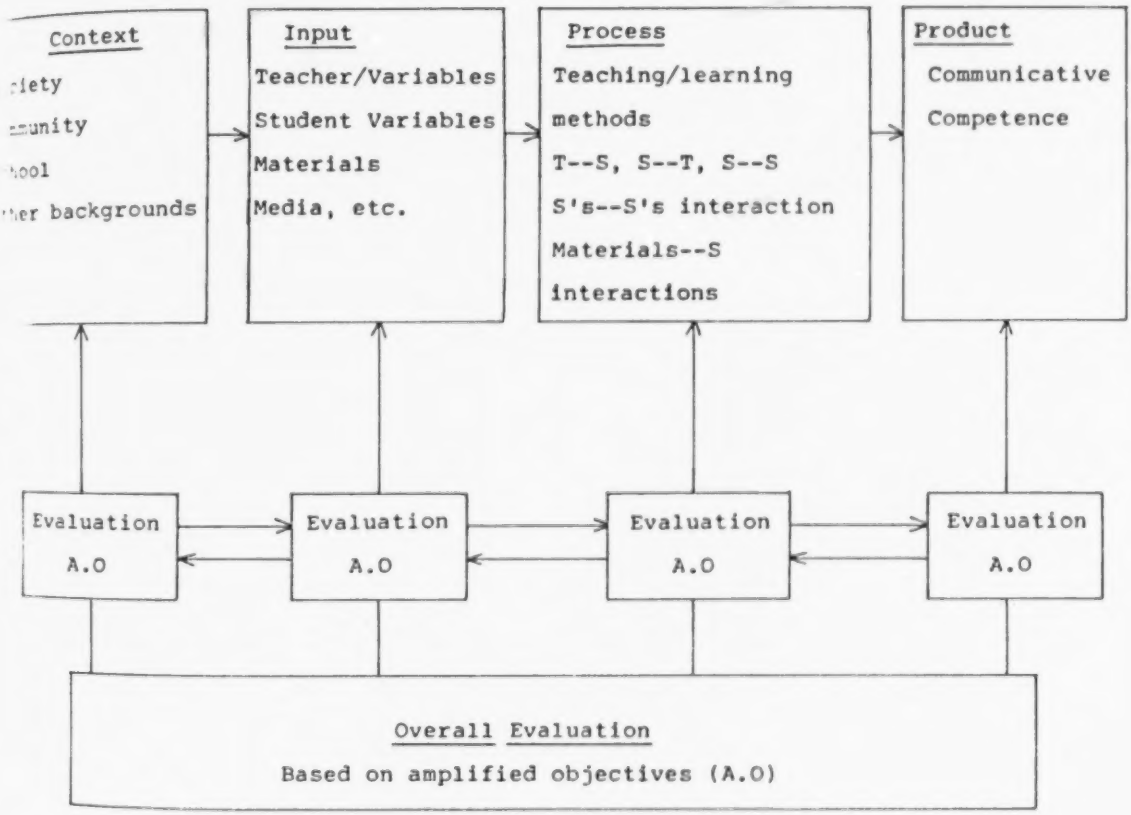
## AMPLIFIED OBJECTIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF LANGUAGE PROGRAM EVALUATION

Hively (1974, p.6) emphasized the necessity of continual formative student evaluation to find out about student growth, strengths and weaknesses within the specified domain of skills and contents by using the results of tests developed from amplified objectives.

As stated earlier, a program of language learning and testing cannot be specified within the domain of skills or contents alone; the sociological and psychological contexts of language interactions need to be included in the domain to be specified for language program development, language teaching and sampled for testing and evaluation. Carroll's parameters (1980) incorporate Halliday's three discourse dimensions (1978), i.e., field of discourse (register, style, topic, function, content of communication) mode of discourse (channel of communication, genre, modality), and tenor of discourse (role

relationships among language users, socio-economic or social statuses, communication occasions governing language styles, e.g., formal, frozen casual, and manners, e.g., polite, impolite).

To illustrate the use of amplified objectives in language program evaluation, Stufflebeam's CIPP model is presented in the diagram below.




Amplified objectives (A.O) can be applied at every stage of program evaluation. They form the basis for data collection, leading to the forming of judgments and the making of decisions. The properties of A.O which have maximal specificity enable the evaluator to detect the congruence, discrepancy, expected criterion and unexpected side-effects.

## Context Evaluation of a Language Program

At this stage, A.O specifying the contextual domain of language use, e.g., the business context, the academic context, the other socio-cultural dimensions of language interactions, are evaluated. Context evaluation is open-ended in the sense that its role is to provide the necessary information for program planning.

## Input Evaluation

Variables integral to a program of learning include teacher variables, student variables, material/media variables, etc. A.O can be used to evaluate the nature, qualities, quantities, qualifications, expectations, inclinations, study habits, etc. of human and non-human input variables.

The A.O at this stage are planning objectives which are to be used with the A.O for context evaluation leading to setting of instructional A.O at the process evaluation stage.

## Process Evaluation

At this stage instructional decisions are set to work by means of interactions between the teacher and the student, the student and the student(s), the teacher and the material/media, the student and the material/media.

The A.O used to evaluate process expand the planning objectives into operational objectives focussing on actual implementation. Both the planned and the spontaneous or unplanned maneuvers are recorded and evaluated through employment of the A.O. This stage of program evaluation mirrors the teaching and learning operations against the backdrop of information obtained from context and input evaluations.

## Product Evaluation

Student communicative competence manifested by his use of language within the domain specified by the A.O is evaluated by achievement tests.

Student learning mastery is evaluated against not only the criterion but the domain of expected cognitive skills and contents.

The A.O used at this stage are outcome oriented. The outcome is evaluated against the criteria of performance. The criteria may be pass/fail or excellent, good, fair, poor, fail. Evaluation results are used for remediation and program revision.

Product evaluation in the domain-referenced context will not be complete without the results of context, input and process evaluations. Therefore, an overall evaluation utilizing the combined sets of A.O at each stage should be conducted in order to obtain a completely valid set of evaluation results.

The parameters of planning, operational and performance A.O are identified as follows:

**Planning**

**Context & Input Evaluations ←——— Amplified Objectives**

- Context & Input Specifications

  Phenomena
  Needs
  Expectations — Concrete
  Experience — Abstract
  Qualitatives-
  Quantitative data

- Evaluation tools as stimuli

  Evaluation techniques
  questionnaire
  interview, etc.

- Type of responses

oral report
written report
test score
student profile
teacher profile
etc.

- Criteria of planning evaluation

methodological criteria
(which techniques to bring
about maximal results)?
textual-media criteria
(which course books, supple-
mentary materials, visual
aids, etc. will lead to
maximal results)?
evaluation criteria
techniques and frequencies of
formative evaluation)

**Product Evaluation** ⟵ **Operational Amplified Objectives**

- Specifications of interactions

Types of interactions
T-S
S-S
S-M (Materials)
Channel of interactions
English
Thai
oral/graphic

Study skills

note-taking

questioning

responding

getting meanings from various clues and cues

expressing meanings

etc.

Task-based operational evaluation

evaluation techniques

types of test items

frequency of evaluation

content of evaluation

Criteria of operational evaluation

degree of congruence with planning amplified objectives (the greater degree of congruence, the better the operation)

**Process Evaluation** ← **Outcome Oriented Amplified Objectives**

Types and frequencies of domain-referenced evaluation

- weekly, monthly, mid-term
- essay, multiple choice
- discrete-point, global test

Types of responses

- supply
- selection

Criteria of performance

pass-fail
excellent, very good, good, fair, poor-fail
(letter-grades, percentage)

**Overall Domain-referenced Program Evaluation**

**4 sets of A.O.**

Forming of judgement about the program

Success, Failure
Degree of success/failure

Making decisions about the program

- Remedial information
- Recycling the input and the process with/without change
- Discontinue the program
- Institute a new program

## AMPLIFIED OBJECTIVES OF MATHAYOMSUKSA SIX (GRADE 12) ENGLISH PROGRAM

Wiriya Sitthisarn, Sunanta Pakpian and Waraporn Sikhachai (1986) have conducted domain-referenced language program evaluations at the context stage in order to find out about the needs of students, teachers and parents for the English programs at Prathomsuksa (grade-school) or elementary level (grades 5-6), at lower secondary level (grades 7-9) and at upper secondary level (grades 10-12). Each developed approximately 100 amplified objectives for each grade from the detailed analysis of the English curriculum for each level. For Mathayomsuksa Six, Wiriya

constructed 113 amplified objectives to be evaluated by students, parents and teachers on a scale of 4 in order to indicate their needs for each item in a domain-referenced English language program. Specimens of the amplified objectives for each sub-domain of communicative competence are presented as follows:

| | Needed Least | | | Needed Most |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. After listening to the economic, political, and sports news, the student is able to answer a four-choice multiple choice question about the main ideas and details of the news. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. After listening to the news, the student is able to make an oral summary of the news. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. While listening to descriptions of people, animals, objects and places, the student is able to ask for more information about the objects of the description. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. While listening to narrations about incidents such as an accident, the student is able to take notes of what happened and able to sequence the incidents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. After listening to songs, and poems, the student is able to express his evaluative comments on what he has heard. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. When someone makes a wrong statement about something, e.g., a personal relationship, the student is able to correct it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | Needed Least | | | Needed Most |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. The student is able to ask for details about people, objects, places, time and activities, and is able to answer these types of questions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. The student is able to make an appropriate oral invitation to various groups of people on various occasions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. The student is able to speak about his determination to do something in an appropriate context or situation, e.g., when asked about his future plan for study. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. When a classmate speaks about something the student is not interested in, he is able to express his disinterest. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. After reading a letter or a note giving directions to a particular place, the student is able to draw a map of the place. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. After reading about a person's daily routine, the student is able to complete a time-table about that person's activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. After reading captions, the student is able to match the captions with pictures. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. After reading an assigned short story or novel, the student is able to relate it to others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | Needed Least | | | Needed Most |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15. After reading a congratulatory letter or card, the student is able to write a thank-you reply. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. After listening to a telephone message, the student is able to take the message down. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. After reading a short story, an article or a novel, the student is able to summarize it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. After reading a short story or a novel, the student is able to extend it from his imagination. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. After reading a "WANT" ad, the student is able to write a letter of application. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. After receiving good/bad news about others, the student is able to write a letter of congratulation/sympathy to the person concerned. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

The amplified objectives of communicative competence specify the context of communications which can be environmentally governed or self-initiated and the types of responses which are performance-based. The criteria, in this case, are not pre-determined. The rating scales from 1 to 4 on the right will be used to specify the criteria for program development and evaluation at process and product stages of language program evaluation.

# APPENDIX I

**Examples**

1. From the learning objectives of English Core Courses English 615, 616 (grade 12) prepare an outline of a domain-referenced language program for evaluative purposes.

| Objective | Language Function | Mode | Genre | Channel | Style | Role | Status | Topic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ex. 1 | Summarize | Listening & Speaking | Description | Face to Face | Formal | Techer to students as audience | Superior - Inferior | People |
| 2. | Summarize | Listening & Writing | Dialogue | Tape recorder | Casual | Friend-Friend | Equal | Invitation to a party |
| 3. | Summarize | Listening & Writing | Short play | Radio | Intimate | Father-Son | Superior - Inferior | Family quarrel |

# APPENDIX II

2. From the learning objectives and the domain-referenced scheme of program evaluation, prepare 20 outcome-oriented amplified objectives specifying the communicative content, test types, and test techniques as stimuli, types and techniques of responses, and criteria.

**Example**

| Learning Objective | Amplified Objective |
|---|---|
| 1. | After listening to statements made by the teacher about people in various professions, the student makes an oral summary of the statements in about 50-60 words. |
| 2. | After listening to a taped dialogue between Bob and Jane in which Bob is inviting Jane to his party, the student summarizes the main points by writing 20-30 words. |
| 3. | After listening to a short radio play about an argument between a son and a father, the student summarizes the play by writing 50-60 words. |

# APPENDIX III

## Learning Objectives
## Core Course Eng. 615, 616

After taking these courses, the student is expected to be able to perform the following:

1. Listen to statements with appropriate difficulty level and summarize the main points.
2. Listen to dialogues with appropriate difficulty level and summarize the main points
3. Listen to short plays and summarize the main points.
4. Converse about daily activities.
5. Converse about interesting events.
6. Ask and answer by giving opinions about the statements and stories the student has listened to.
7. Narrate personal experiences and stories the student has read by using vocabulary, expressions and grammar with appropriate level of difficulty.
8. Enunciate words, phrases, sentences and statements using correct stress, intonation and rhythm to communicate intended meanings.
9. Read statements and assigned short stories with comprehension and be able to express opinions.
10. Read poems and summarize or express relevant opinions.
11. Get the main points of, and express ideas or opinions about advertisements, announcements, notices, labels and instructions which the student has read.
12. Read newspapers or magazines and discuss with friends.
13. Take dictations.
14. Write sentences using complex structures with appropriate vocabulary and expressions.
15. Write statements and essays from guidelines or pictures given.
16. Complete a conversation using pictures or statements about specific events.
17. Write personal letters, business letters and fill out various forms by using appropriate expressions and punctuations.

18. Write statements, stories or advertisements using the student's own ideas.

19. Use English-English dictionaries appropriate to the student's level of English learning.

20. Organize or participate in the cultural or daily activities of native speakers of English.

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